

WITH THE SHAYKH



Are there Any Trivial Issues in Religion?

Shaykh Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿUthaymīn *

The question is about whether or not religious issues may be divided into those that are trivial (*qushūr*, sing. *qishr*: lit. “husk”, “shell”) and those that are essential (*ḥubb*, lit. “core”, “essence”), and whether growing one’s beard falls into the former category. Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn, may Allah have mercy upon him, responded by saying:

Dividing-up the religion into [matters that are] trivial (*qushūr*) and essential (*ḥubb*) is erroneous and invalid. For all of the religion is essential. All of it is useful for a person. All of it draws one closer to Allah. All of it begets reward for a person. And all of it benefits him in that it increases him in faith and humility towards his Lord - even in issues connected to one’s dress, appearance, or other such things. All these things, if a person acts on them seeking proximity to Allah, Mighty and Majestic is He, and by following His Messenger, peace be upon him, then he shall be rewarded for doing so. Trivial issues, as is known, tend not to be of benefit; in fact, they may even be discarded. Thus, there is nothing in this religion, or in Islam’s Sacred Law, that is of this nature. Rather, all of the Sacred Law is essential for which - providing a person is sincere in his intention for Allah and does his best to follow the Prophet, peace be upon him - one will certainly benefit from.

Those who propagate such a view should seriously reconsider this matter so that they may realise what is true and correct. They must then follow the truth and give-up this erroneous notion. It is true, though, that some religious issues are of greater importance or priority than others; such as the Five Pillars of Islam. The Prophet, peace be upon him, explained them in his statement: “Islam is built upon five [pillars]: testifying that none has the right to be worshiped but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing the prayers, paying the *ḥajj*, undertaking pilgrimage to the House, and fasting in Ramadan.”¹ Other issues are of lesser importance than these; but nothing is trivial in that it will not benefit a person and may thus be discarded or cast aside.

In relation to the beard, there is no doubt that growing it is an act of worship. The Prophet, peace be upon him, ordered doing so,² and whatever the Prophet, peace be upon him, stricture is an act of worship by which one may draw closer to their Lord. It is not just the guidance of our Prophet, but, in fact, of all the other Prophets too. Allah, Exalted is He, relates about Aaron that he said to his brother Moses: “O son of my mother, do not seize me by my beard or my head.”³ It is also confirmed from the Prophet, peace be upon him, that growing the beard is actually part of man’s innate nature or *fiṭrah* which Allah created man upon.⁴ Growing it, therefore, is a devotional act, not a customary one. Neither is it a trivial act, as alleged by some people.

**TRANSLATOR'S ENDNOTES**

* *Fatāwā Arkān al-Islām* (Riyadh: Dār al-Thurayyah, 2001), 200-1; no.116. Translated by Abu Aaliyah.

1. Al-Bukhārī, no.8; Muslim, no.16.

2. In a hadith recorded in al-Bukhārī (no.5892) and Muslim (1:222), the Prophet, peace be upon him, asserted: “Grow your beard and trim your moustache and be distinct from the polytheists.”

3. Qur'an 20:94.

4. “Ten things are part of the *fiṭrah*: trimming the moustache, growing the beard, using the toothstick, sniffing up water [into the nose], clipping the nails, washing the finger-joints, plucking the hair under the armpits, shaving pubic hair, and washing the private parts after answering the call of nature,” said the Prophet, peace be upon him. Muṣ'ab ibn Shaybah, one of the narrators in the chain, states: I have forgotten the tenth, though I think it may have been gargling water. Recorded by Muslim, no.261.